

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1 - 19 cancelled

¹ ~~20~~. (Currently Amended) A hand-held apparatus for writing optical indicia on a medium, the apparatus comprising:

a housing configured to be hand held while disconnected from the medium;

a central processing unit (CPU) for controlling the apparatus;

an interface for connecting the apparatus to external devices;

^{C1} a light source connected to the housing for generating a light beam suited for writing the optical indicia on the medium; and

a scanning element connected to the housing under control of the CPU that directs the light beam at the medium in a pattern prescribed by the CPU

⁹ wherein the position and orientation of the light beam relative to the medium is
⁹ dependent on the orientation in which the user holds the housing, which is disconnected from the medium.

² ~~21~~. (Original Claim) The apparatus of claim ¹ ~~20~~ wherein the optical indicia comprises alphanumeric characters.

⁴ ~~22~~. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim ¹ ~~20~~ wherein the medium is thermal sensitive.

⁵ ~~23~~. (Original Claim) The apparatus of claim ¹ ~~20~~ wherein the light source is a laser.

³ ~~24~~. (Original Claim) The apparatus of claim ² ~~21~~ wherein the light beam is a pulsed laser beam.

⁶ ~~25~~. (Original Claim) The apparatus of claim ¹ ~~20~~ wherein the scanning element comprises a scanning mirror.